

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

ALEMAYEHU GETACHEW,)	4:13CV3182
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	MEMORANDUM
)	AND ORDER
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF)	
LABOR,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

Plaintiff filed a Complaint in this matter on October 24, 2013. (Filing No. [1](#).) Plaintiff has previously been given leave to proceed in forma pauperis. (Filing No. [6](#).) The court now conducts an initial review of the Complaint to determine whether summary dismissal is appropriate under [28 U.S.C. §§ 1915\(e\)](#) and [1915A](#).

I. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

Plaintiff filed this matter on October 24, 2013, against the Nebraska Department of Labor. (Filing No. [1](#) at CM/ECF p. 1.) In the Complaint, Plaintiff alleges that the Nebraska Department of Labor violated Plaintiff's equal protection rights when it "cut off Plaintiff's unemployment compensation." (*Id.* at CM/ECF p. 3.) Plaintiff seeks \$236,250.00 in monetary damages.

II. APPLICABLE LEGAL STANDARDS ON INITIAL REVIEW

The court is required to review prisoner and in forma pauperis complaints seeking relief against a governmental entity or an officer or employee of a governmental entity to determine whether summary dismissal is appropriate. *See* [28 U.S.C. §§ 1915\(e\)](#) and [1915A](#). The court must dismiss a complaint or any portion thereof that states a frivolous or malicious claim, that fails to state a claim upon which

relief may be granted, or that seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. [28 U.S.C. § 1915\(e\)\(2\)\(B\)](#); [28 U.S.C. § 1915A](#).

A pro se plaintiff must set forth enough factual allegations to “nudge[] their claims across the line from conceivable to plausible,” or “their complaint must be dismissed” for failing to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. [Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly](#), 550 U.S. 544, 569-70 (2007); see also [Ashcroft v. Iqbal](#), 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950 (2009) (“A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.”). Regardless of whether a plaintiff is represented or is appearing pro se, the plaintiff’s complaint must allege specific facts sufficient to state a claim. See [Martin v. Sargent](#), 780 F.2d 1334, 1337 (8th Cir. 1985). However, a pro se plaintiff’s allegations must be construed liberally. [Burke v. North Dakota Dep’t of Corr. & Rehab.](#), 294 F.3d 1043, 1043-44 (8th Cir. 2002) (citations omitted).

III. DISCUSSION OF CLAIMS

The Eleventh Amendment bars claims for damages by private parties against a state, state instrumentalities and an employee of a state sued in the employee’s official capacity. See, e.g., [Egerdahl v. Hibbing Cmty. Coll.](#), 72 F.3d 615, 619 (8th Cir. 1995); [Dover Elevator Co. v. Ark. State Univ.](#), 64 F.3d 442, 446-47 (8th Cir. 1995). Any award of retroactive monetary relief payable by the state, including for back pay or damages, is proscribed by the Eleventh Amendment absent a waiver of immunity by the state or an override of immunity by Congress. See, e.g., [Dover Elevator Co.](#), 64 F.3d at 444; [Nevels v. Hanlon](#), 656 F.2d 372, 377-78 (8th Cir. 1981). Sovereign immunity does not bar damages claims against state officials acting in their personal capacities, nor does it bar claims brought pursuant to [42 U.S.C. § 1983](#) that seek equitable relief from state employee defendants acting in their official capacity.

Here, Plaintiff sues the Nebraska Department of Labor, a state agency, for monetary relief only. (Filing No. [1](#).) As discussed above, Plaintiff may not sue a state agency for monetary relief absent a waiver of immunity by the state or an override of immunity by Congress. There is no indication that the state waived or Congress overrode immunity here. Accordingly, Defendant is entitled to sovereign immunity and Plaintiff's claims must be dismissed. *See, e.g., [Calderon v. Connecticut](#), No. 3:07cv1476, 2007 WL 3124717, at *2 (D. Conn. Oct. 24, 2007)* (dismissing a plaintiff's claim that the Connecticut Department of Labor discriminated against her by denying her unemployment benefits on sovereign immunity grounds).

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. Plaintiff's Complaint (filing no. [1](#)) is dismissed without prejudice.
2. A separate judgment will be entered in accordance with this Memorandum and Order.

DATED this 14th day of April, 2014.

BY THE COURT:

s/ John M. Gerrard
United States District Judge

*This opinion may contain hyperlinks to other documents or Web sites. The U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska does not endorse, recommend, approve, or guarantee any third parties or the services or products they provide on their Web sites. Likewise, the court has no agreements with any of these third parties or their Web sites. The court accepts no responsibility for the availability or functionality of any hyperlink. Thus, the fact that a hyperlink ceases to work or directs the user to some other site does not affect the opinion of the court.